

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A spread illuminating apparatus comprising:  
a transparent substrate made of a light-transmissible material and  
having a light reflection pattern formed on at least one surface thereof; and  
a bar-like light source disposed close to an end surface of the  
transparent substrate,  
wherein a cover formed of a light-transmissible material is integrally provided  
over the one surface of the transparent substrate sandwiching a cushioning  
material consisting of a light-transmissible substance.
2. A spread illuminating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the  
cushioning material is of a substance with low refractive index.
3. A spread illuminating apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the  
substance is gel.
4. A spread illuminating apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the  
substance is liquid.
5. A spread illuminating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the  
cushioning material is of a gaseous substance.
6. A spread illuminating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a thin  
film of a substance with low refractive index is formed on the light reflection  
pattern of the transparent substrate, and the cushioning material is of a gel  
substance.
7. A spread illuminating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a thin  
film of a substance with low refractive index is formed on the light reflection  
pattern of the transparent substrate, and the cushioning material is of a  
liquid substance.
8. A spread illuminating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a thin  
film of a substance with low refractive index is formed on the light reflection

pattern of the transparent substrate, and the cushioning material is of a gaseous substance.

9. A spread illuminating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the cushioning material comprises a plurality of transparent elastic members.

10. A spread illuminating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the cover is formed of a hard material.

11. A spread illuminating apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the hard material is glass.

12. A spread illuminating apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the hard material is transparent polymer.

13. A spread illuminating apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the cover constitutes a lower electrode substrate of a touch panel which may be disposed over the spread illuminating apparatus.